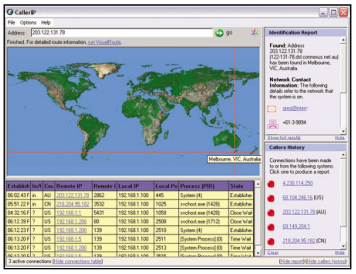
by Kevin Savetz



**CallerIP 1.1**
$29.95
Visualware
www.visualware.com

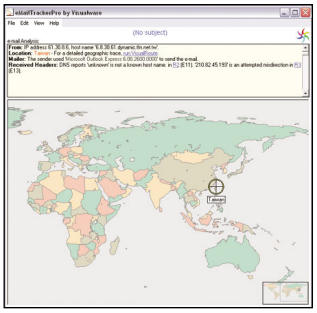
# Visualware CallerIP 1.1

The average Internet-connected PC can have dozens of background connections every hour without the user's knowledge. CallerIP can help decipher what is connecting. The app monitors TCP/IP connections and presents charts of its activity. When an incoming/outgoing connection is made, CallerIP shows information about that connection. You see the remote IP address and port number and, if you're running Windows XP, the app that made or accepted the connection.

I disabled my firewall, and within minutes CallerIP showed scores of attempted connections from port-scanning scripts, worms, and more. The number of unauthorized attempts is amazing (and discouraging). Clicking an IP address shows contact info, including an email address, phone number, and mailing address for that network and domain. The selected network location is also highlighted on a world map. This is equivalent to (but easier than) using Dig and Whois.

You can't see the content of the traffic, just the source/destination, so CallerIP doesn't provide as much data as a full-fledged packet sniffer. It also doesn't block connections. During testing, a dialog box warned me a possible backdoor connection was made. It was just my Mac's file-sharing client.

Caller IP is much easier to use than a packet sniffer and more informative than some firewalls. ▲



**eMailTrackerPro 3.0a**
$29.95
Visualware
www.visualware.com

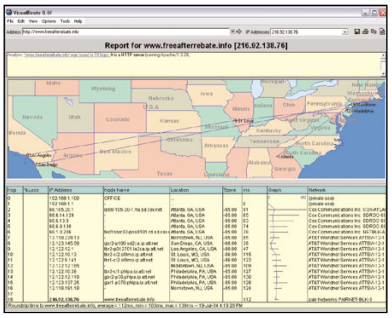
# Visualware eMailTrackerPro 3.0a

eMailTrackerPro is another app in Visualware's arsenal of detective tools. It aims to determine the source of spam, viruses, and other email messages. When you feed the program a message's headers, it attempts to verify the host that originated the message and show the message's origin on a world map. If the sender is disguised, the app identifies the misdirection scheme used to obscure it.

If you use Microsoft Outlook, eMailTrackerPro adds a tracker button to the toolbar for one-click activation. For any other mail client, you must copy message headers to the clipboard and then paste them into eMailTrackerPro for analysis.

The program doesn't do much more than any moderately knowledgeable user could do by reading the message headers and using Dig to look up IP addresses. Although it can verify if a message's source is legitimate or forged, its helpfulness ends there. There are no tools for reporting, bouncing, or otherwise dealing with a message if it's spam. It can also be too vague when reporting a message's origin, showing only "The Americas." (A Whois search might show the address, city, and phone number of the sender's ISP.)

eMailTrackerPro is a one-trick pony, and the trick simply isn't that useful. ▲



**VisualRoute Personal Edition 8.0f**
$49.95
Visualware
www.visualware.com

# Visualware VisualRoute Personal Edition 8.0f

VisualRoute combines traceroute, ping, and Whois functions into a graphical interface. When you type a URL or IP address into the program's Address bar, it builds a traceroute table, showing a packet's path from your PC to the destination server. A graph shows the minimum, average, and maximum times ping packets took to reach each host along the way, which can help identify network bottlenecks. Best of all, a large world map shows the route those packets take.

Clicking a network or node name in the traceroute table reveals info from Whois about that network. You can export the traceroute data and map as HTML, JPG, or text. The program also includes a ping utility that graphs the roundtrip response time for each packet. When you type an email address into the email tracker function, the program lists and then verifies that host's mail servers.

The interface can be inconsistent; some windows look like they belong on X rather than Windows. Aside from the map, the program doesn't provide any more information than text-based traceroute tools, but it's significantly easier to use, more configurable, and prettier. I'm just not sure it's worth $49.95 unless you spend a lot of time troubleshooting network problems. ▲

CPU Ranking: 0 = Absolutely Worthless 2.5 = Absolutely Average 5 = Absolutely Perfect